

men had bolted overnight, and this caused trouble, for the yak is an obstinate animal and each wants one man quite to himself when carrying baggage. That day one man had to suffice for three or four of them, and the poor fellows left behind were manifestly in for a bad time. The Yagan-Dawan proved a very narrow saddle flanked by steep ridges on the east and west. In order to get a full view we climbed the western ridge, and reached its top at an elevation of about 12,000 feet. It was a splendid survey station, completely commanding the confused network of rocky ridges and deep-cut ravines which extends between the middle courses of the Yurung-kash and Kara-kash. We now stood on the watershed between the two rivers. But the high serrated range we had crossed from Nissa shut off the view of the great snowy mountains south, and even of the dominating Muztagh we could only sight the glacier-covered northern buttresses. So the hope of triangulation was once more doomed to disappointment.

I shall never forget the view that opened westwards and in the direction of the distant plains. There were lines upon lines of absolutely bare rocky spurs, closely packed together and running mostly from south to north; between them, shut in by unscalable rock slopes, was a maze of arid gorges, of which the bottom could not be seen. It was like a choppy sea, with its waves petrified in wild confusion. Far away on the horizon this rocky waste was disappearing in a yellow haze, the familiar indication of another region which knows no life—the distant sea of sand.

The impressions gathered in front of this panorama were heightened when, after three hours' busy work, we descended into the ravine leading down from the pass to the north-west. About 1,500 feet below the saddle the bottom was reached, and then began a passage of fantastic rock defiles, the like of which I had never seen. For nearly three hours I marched between walls of conglomerate and apparently chalky rock